

CO-OPERATIVE

REVIEW



CO-OP BUDGET DOWN

The Co-operative Development Programme (CDP) scored surprisingly badly in the recent Victorian State Budget. The programme received just \$600,000, exactly the same allocation as last year. This contrasts sharply with the figure of \$1 million mooted as being a likely amount to be allocated to the programme.

In real terms of course, the \$600,000 allocated in this budget represents an effective cut in the program's funds as an inflation rate of 11% has not been accounted for.

This decrease in funding came as a complete surprise to those working on/participating in the programme. All previous indications showed that the CDP enjoyed high esteem within the Ministry of Employment and Training, was popular with the Minister Mr Jim Simmonds, and could expect expansion.

What is means for co-operatives

Funded co-operatives who have received assurances of grants (and who comply with guidelines) will not be disappointed. However, monies already committed to those groups totals \$456,000, leaving only \$144,000 for contingencies affecting funded co-operatives and allocations to new co-operatives.

Newly formed co-operatives wishing to join the programme face pretty grim prospects. The funding committee already has before it submissions from hopeful co-operatives. Competition for the small amount of money will be fierce and more stringent standards could be expected than were required last year. The number of new groups able to join the programme will be so small as to effectively maintain a no growth situation for the CDP.

The CDP and the Ministry

Most worrying of all is the realisation that the Co-operative Development Programme has not found favour in the new government's first budget. It is hard to interpret the funding decrease as anything other than a slow winding down of the Programme.

This decrease is specific to the CDP, not to the Ministry as a whole. The overall amount allocated to the Ministry of Employment and Training for 82/83 is \$18,282,174 which represents a 51% increase on last year's (actual) figure of \$12,109,958. \$30 million has been allocated for other employment initiatives which will be administered by MEAT.

The Employment Initiatives Programme has been established as a specific, targetted approach aimed at creating employment for those who have been unemployed for six months or more and/or for those in areas experiencing well above the average level of unemployment in the State. Under the new scheme:

- The government will provide a wage subsidy of \$70 a week to local authorities and community groups for up to six months for each additional job created that would not otherwise have been created;

Continued page 2



CO-OPERATIVE BUDGET DOWN

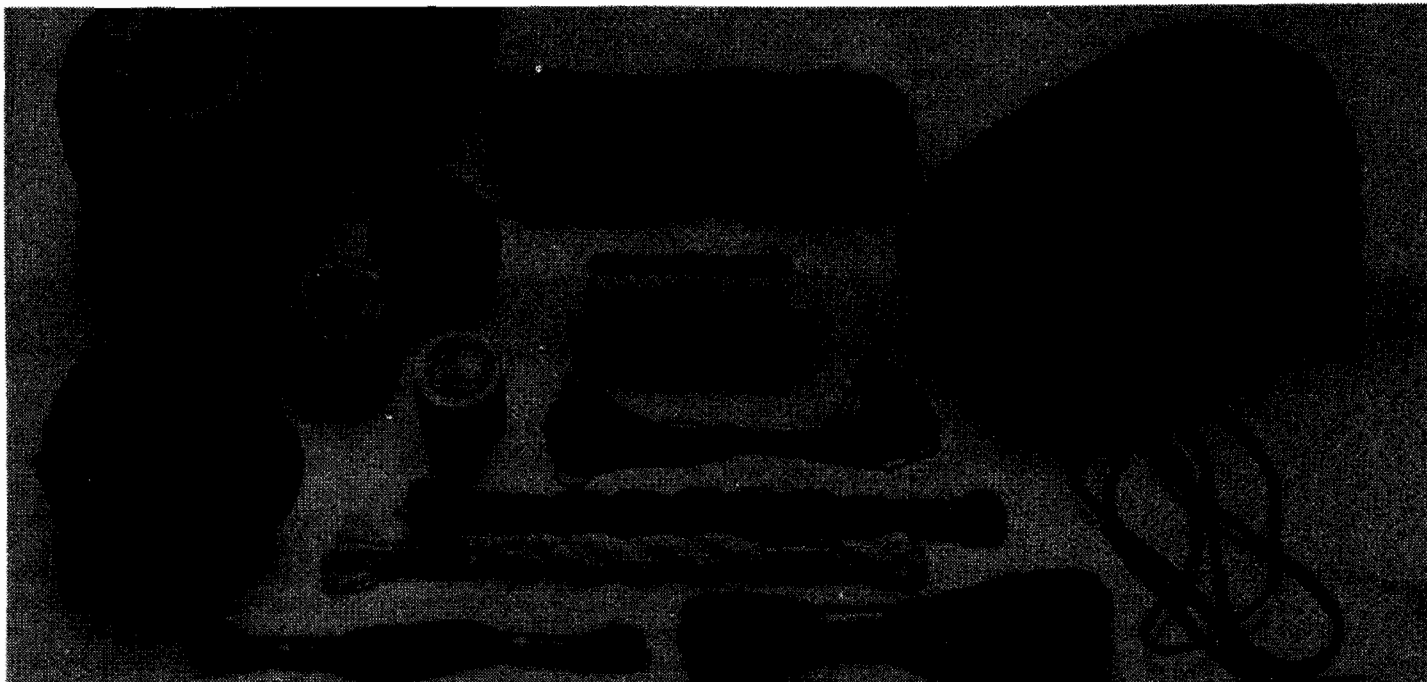
- Public sector and non-profit areas can apply for money for projects which are labour intensive and likely to improve community facilities;

- jobs will be created in areas of high unemployment to fulfill small works and public sector maintenance.

Whilst most co-operative members will approve the approach taken by the Cain

Government to establishing immediate, short-term employment, the question remains as to why the Co-operative Development Programme has been cut back.

continued page 12



APPALACHIAN HANDICRAFTS

— By Garry Barker, of MATCH, Inc.

Low-income people in Appalachia have formed MATCH, Inc., a federated co-operative to market traditional handicrafts they have always produced. The Co-operative concept is not new to these rural people. It is rooted in traditional values of maintaining individualism and self-sufficiency while sharing work and profits.

The concept is simply being revived as a modern business arrangement to serve craft producers' needs, just as it has served agricultural/producers. The idea is the same. Instead of crops, the marketable commodity is valuable handmade items, carefully fashioned by skilled individuals. For those who use them, the crafts are a reminder of a traditional rural way of life worth preserving.

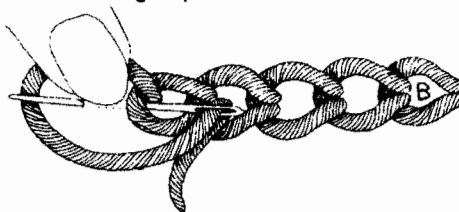
"Rehumanizing the marketplace" is the goal of the coalition of 22 low-income craft production co-operatives in 7 Appalachian States. The coalition's 4,000 members produce traditional folk crafts, primarily in cottage-industry settings. Each co-operative is owned and controlled by its members. Some are small, involving as few as 10 people, others as many as 1,500 members.

Marketing and Training

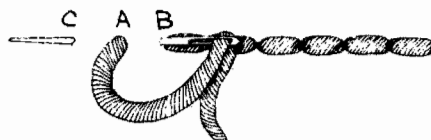
85% of the members are women, 50% are below the Federal poverty minimum, and all are involved in the marketing and

training programs coordinated by Marketing Appalachia's Traditional Community Handicrafts (MATCH) from its headquarters in the recently restored historic L & N Railway Depot in Berea, Kentucky.

MATCH aptly describes the unique co-operative corporation organised to provide technical and marketing assistance to its member-groups.



Born in 1974 as an outgrowth of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia, the Co-operative operates "The Appalachia Shop" in the Lexington Convention Centre Mall in Lexington, Kentucky, a store in Cincinnati, Ohio, and last summer opened the old Berea Depot as a Folk Art Center, with a warehouse, gallery, showroom and shop. Eventually, the depot will feature a restaurant with regional foods.



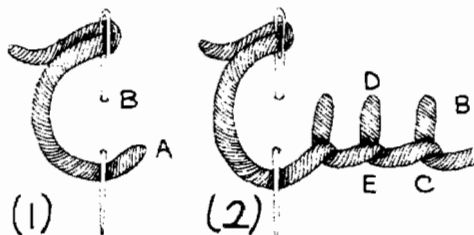
Variety of Funding

Funding for projects has come from a variety of sources, including churches, Kentucky State Arts Commission, ACTION, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

The Lexington shop, opened with a \$50,000 loan, is now self-supporting, and grosses more than \$160,000 a year, primarily in software (quilts, toys, bonnets, etc) and wool. All items are produced by member Co-operatives. After the business loan is repaid, net margins from the shop will be distributed among Co-operative members. No grant funds have gone to the shop, though purchasing and accounting are handled through the Berea headquarters. The Appalachia Shop does not purchase crafts from non-members.

The depot building, leased for 20 years from the City of Berea, is the key to MATCH'S future development. The city acquired the old station from the L & N Railway, used Kentucky Heritage Commission funds to install a new heating system, and gained listing in the Kentucky and National Historic Registers. The Co-operative invested more than \$50,000 to create office space and develop the craft warehouse. The warehouse supplies the Appalachia Shops, Folk Art Centre, a retail catalogue, and possibly a second shop in Tennessee. If everything materialises as planned, annual sales are expected to reach \$7000,000 within the next 5 years.

Membership in MATCH is not open. Applicants must be active producing craft co-operatives in the Appalachian region; have an effective quality control system in use; and be IRS (Internal Revenue Service) approved (or in the approval process). Groups pay an initial \$250 investment fee and \$50 annual dues.



Low Income

MATCH differs from most craft guilds. Its services are restricted to low-income groups. It has clearly defined economic goals. Educational programs are tailored to improve production and marketing by the members. Every project is geared toward increasing sales and family income.

Through experience, the Co-operative has found the most effective product development approach is to simply upgrade existing work. Each group has a distinct "speciality" such as wood from Kentucky Hills Industries, and quilts from Grass Roots. The bulk of the market is in the software category.

The Manager, Mrs. Poage, points to a problem familiar to all craft marketing administrators, the reluctance of most State and Federal offices to recognize the crafts (and the total "cottage industry" concept) as a major economic development tool. Few agencies understand the value of supplemental income to Appalachian families. Benefits cannot be measured in the traditional "jobs per dollar" Federal formula.



Technical Provider

Mrs. Poage is especially proud of the strong sense of "ownership" members feel toward the Co-operative. In view of 7 years of survival and growth, "We're doing something right", she says.

That "something" is perhaps best outlined in a brochure. It explains how the organisation relates to the members "in both human and economic terms". Members are humans first, producers second.

MATCH has been designated a "Technical Provider" by the new National Consumer Co-operative Bank to work with the bank to develop loan packages for member groups for new marketing outlets, larger inventories, revolving funds for purchase of raw materials and equipment, and other needs.



• Hodja Educational Resources Co-op has moved down the road to 135 Church Street, Richmond. Their new phone number is 429 6111. Hodja has recently launched a new kit called the Latin American Car Rally Game. For further information phone Hodja.

• The Turkish Women's Co-op and the Essendon Job Generation Group have completed their feasibility studies. Unfortunately the results of these studies indicated that their proposed businesses were not viable. Consequently the groups have decided not to continue with their applications for funding.

• Red Letter Press (Brunswick Work Co-op) will be moving premises soon. In the next Review we'll give you their new address. In the last month Red Letter has produced two new posters for sale; one on the effects of a nuclear blast (\$3) and the other deals with the role big business plays in the nuclear industry (\$6). For further information phone Chris, Bob, Maura or Jane on 383 3087.

• The Loch Ard Trading Co-operative of 56 Leibig Street, Warrnambool phone (055) 626 388, have been getting a lot of business with their framing service in the last month.

• The Italo-Anglo Co-operative have been frantically renovating their premises at 140 Lygon Street, East Brunswick, just south of Glenlyon Road. The Restaurant is due to open in early October. If you're interested in making a booking phone 380 6284.

• Wonderfood (healthy take-away tucker) catered for the AUS sponsored National Conference on Sexual Harassment held in Melbourne at the Prahran CAE on September 18th and 19th. The group have found a commercial kitchen from which to work at 305 Victoria Street, West Melbourne.

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PLANNING GROUP

1982 meeting timetable:

Time: 4pm - 6pm.

Vocational Orientation Centre.

42 Cardigan St., Carlton.

Ph: 347 7611 x 256.

Dates: October 5, 19.
November 2, 16, 30.
December 14.

CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

Has your co-operative submitted material to a recent edition of the Co-operative Review? We seek involvement from co-operatives and hope to publish your material or pursue areas you express interest in.

Please do phone Karina, Tony or Wendy at the VOC (347 7611 ext. 256) with ideas for material for future editions.

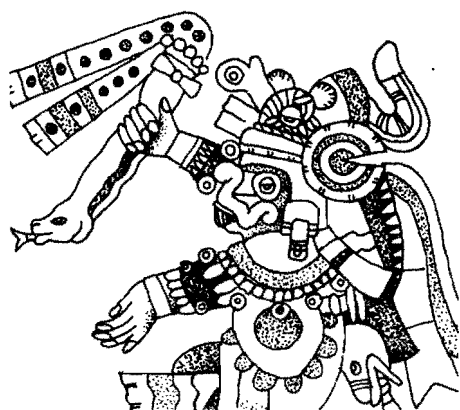
Published by the Co-operative Education and Training Unit of the Vocational Orientation Centre, 42 Cardigan Street, Carlton. 3053.

Artwork and typesetting by Correctline Graphics Co-operative, layout by Red-letter Press of Brunswick Work Co-operative and printing by Sybylla Co-operative Press and Publications Ltd.

PUTTING WHEELS ON MULTI-CULTURALISM

Apart from the recent Falklands War, Latin America has rarely impinged upon the consciousness of most Australians. In the past decade some 40,000 Latin Americans have migrated to Australia, many as political refugees, but the overwhelming majority of Australians remain ignorant of the history, geography and culture of the biggest continent in the Southern Hemisphere.

One of Victoria's Co-operatives, Hodja — in Richmond, aims to change all that with its latest publication, the Latin American Car Rally Game.



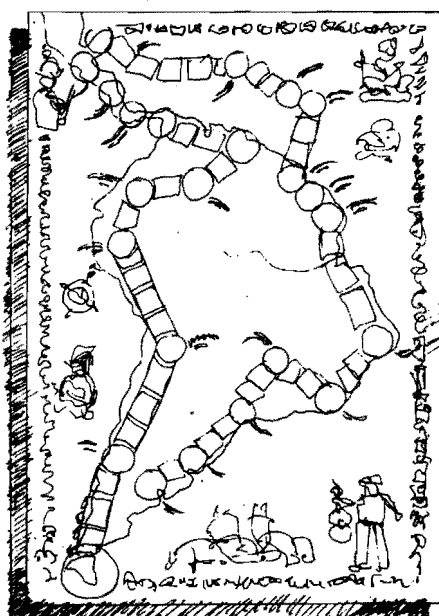
Launching the game on the 6th August, the Hon. Mr. Peter Spyker, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, in the new Victorian Labor Government, said that the Hodja Co-op was to be congratulated. "For practising multi-culturalism and bi-lingualism to its fullest extent by producing the game kit in both English and Spanish". "It gives players the opportunity to cross the barriers of ignorance and informs those who associate Latin America with little more than the Falkland Islands conflict".

Speaking on behalf of Hodja, Mr. Ron Harper, editorial co-ordinator, said, "Our Co-Op which works out of the Richmond Community Education Centre is deeply committed to developing multi-cultural ideas but we also believe that multi-cultural education should be fun". However, this does not mean a "spaghetti day" or "taco day". The kit was designed by Manual Ragifo, a Spanish consultant, and Barbara Finlay and Irene Peirano, teachers at St. Johns Catholic School, for use in upper primary and lower secondary schools. Ms. Finlay and Ms. Peirano, tested the kit extensively with their students before it was produced.

page 4.

The kit includes a ball game that takes players on an informative tour of the Latin American countries from Tierra Del Fuego to Mexico to Uruguay. The text of the Board is in simple Spanish and the kit also includes in both English and Spanish, 50 comprehension cards, 52 instruction cards, a well illustrated handbook for teachers, and of course, a dice and playing tokens. The kit costs \$21 or \$95 for a class set.

For further information contact Hodja at 135 Church Street, Richmond, Ph: 429 6111.



PRESIDENT RETIRES

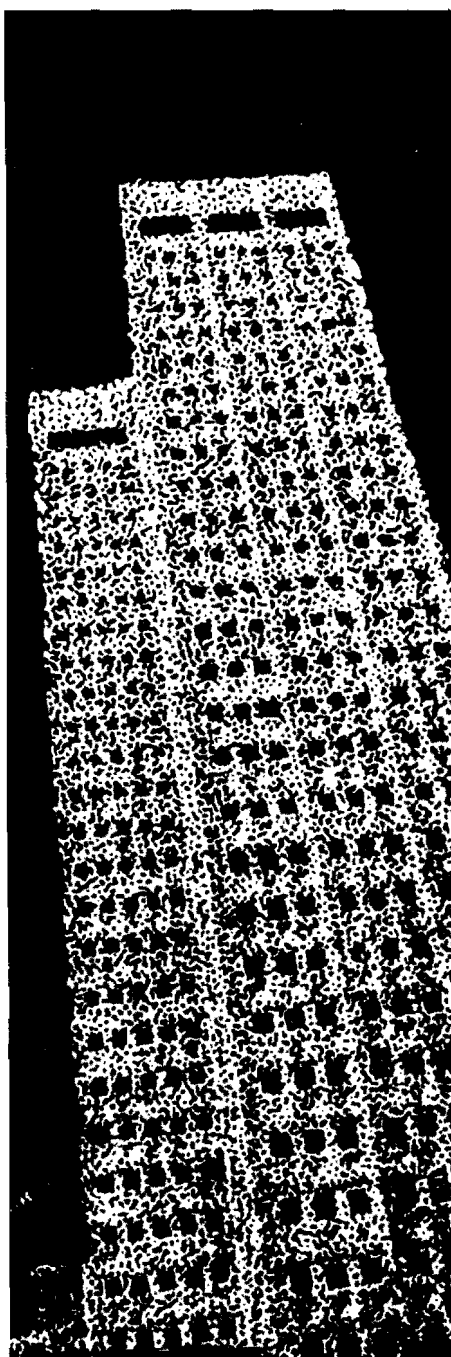
Mr. Irwin Hunter, President of the Co-operative Federation of Australia from 1976 retired from that office and from the Council at the Annual General Meeting held in Melbourne in August 1982. He has been associated with the Council of this national co-operative organisation since 1967.

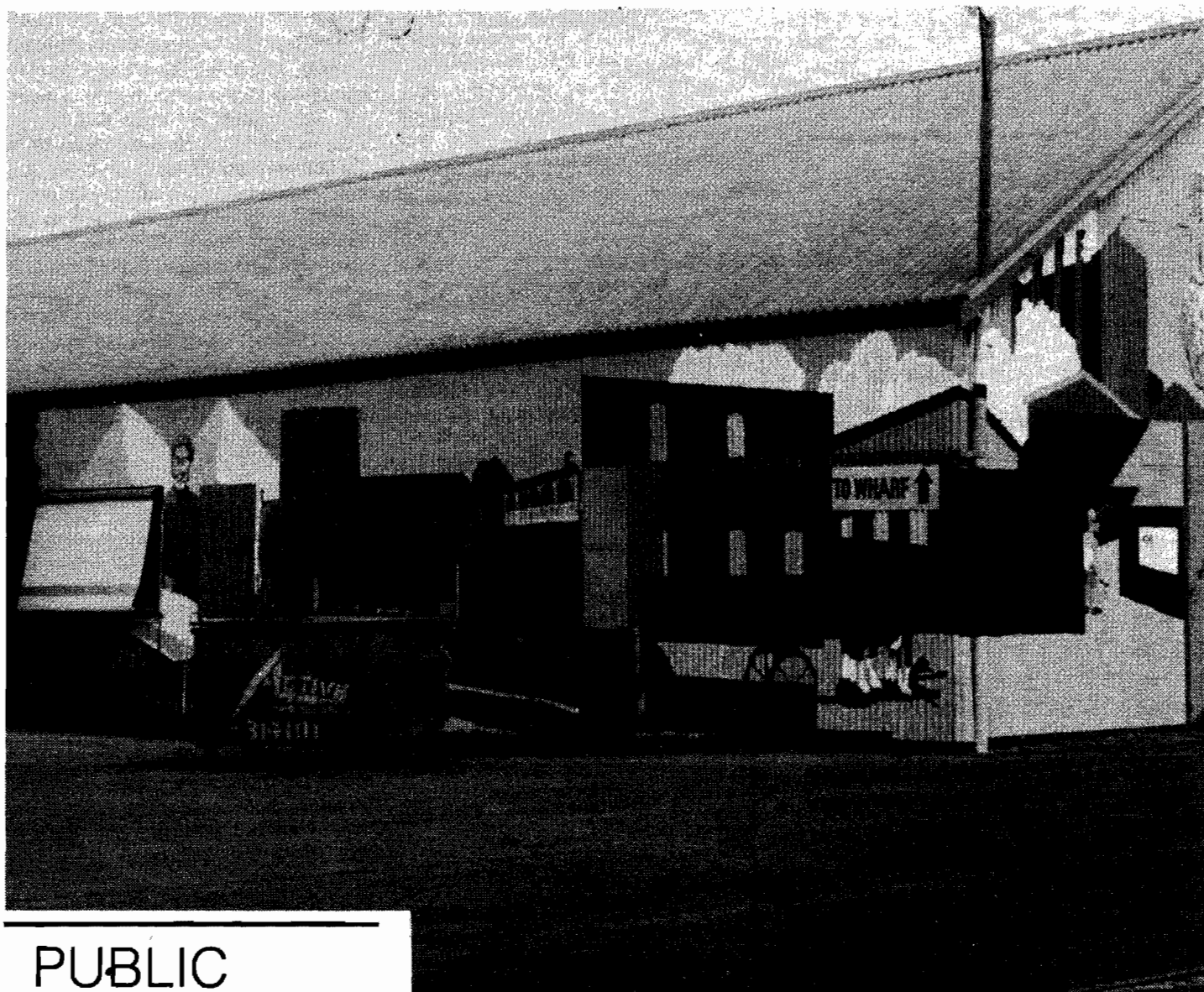
In the past 15 years, in addition to steering activities of the common concern to co-operatives within Australia he has been very active on the international co-operative scene. He was the Australian member of the International Co-operative Alliance Central Committee headquartered in Europe.

He was a member of the international Advisory Council set up to develop policies for the operation of the International Co-operative Alliance Regional office for South East Asia based in New Delhi. The countries served by this Regional office extend from Iran to the west to Japan and include Australia. He was also involved as Chairman and member of Trade and Agriculture Co-operative Development Committees at the international level.

His retirement from these offices coincides with his retirement as a senior executive of Westralian Farmers Co-operative.

Mr. Hunter has been succeeded as President of the Co-operative Federation of Australia by Mr. John Herring of Rice Growers Co-operative Mills in Leeton, New South Wales.





PUBLIC IMAGES

Public Images is a community-based mural group with the aims of providing:

- A stable income secure base for worker members of the co-operative through the painting of murals.
- Maximum participation and decision-making for worker-members.
- A service to the community and to industry.
- An economically viable business enabling the above to happen.

Through an initial interest in murals generated by the Educational Program for Unemployed Youth (E.P.U.Y.) and support from the Willaimstown community, the group was formed in May 1981, completing several projects in the western suburbs before receiving Government funding this year.

We have a limited shareholder membership of 12, with all workers represented on the Board of Directors. This reduces the chances of a distasteful, lumbering hierarchial structure.

This year has seen us gain recognition throughout the community-art movement as one of the most innovative schemes to date, i.e. a group of "non-professionals" providing a service normally the reserve of "professionals". We want to consolidate this general support and build upon it, developing the relevant artistic and business skills collectively and individually to become more professional and viable, ideally broadening our horizons and creating opportunities for other unemployed people by example or demand.

The combination of our unique service and the desperate economic situation of community groups makes for long periods of negotiation for funding before a mural proceeds. So far, we've avoided any ulcers and like many others we've had to balance survival against idealism.

However, we expect the importance of Community Art's activities in general will increase over the years as people have more leisure time (enforced or otherwise), with murals having a very public role in the communication of social concerns and reflection of a particular community's spirit.

Each mural is planned and executed as a community involvement project with residents, workers and muralists working together in the conceptual design stages and in the actual painting. Murals work well when the needs of this large cross-section of the community (consumers) are consulted and included.

Though not working exclusively in the Western Suburbs, we have many ties to the area and feel there is much to do and gain by utilizing the many "ugly" areas and the surprising (to some) unity of the people. The recent "St Alban's Show" is a good example of this. We plan to work closely with the people through our involvement with the region's festivals and hopefully be able to take our services to the workplace creating precedents for the acceptance of the arts inside industry as a useful function by management.

We regard ourselves as just one of the organizations over here concerned with the directions society is taking, hoping our presence demonstrates an alternative which will give rise to other new projects.

THE PROSPECT OF THE C.D.P.

David Griffiths, co-ordinator of the C.D.P., delivered a paper to the Vocational Orientation Centre's Seminar on Work Co-operatives (16.8.82) entitled *The Co-operative Development Programme: Six Questions. The body of the paper responded to the six questions:*

- What is the Co-operative Development Programme?
- What could the Programme achieve?
- Which groups have been funded under the Programme?
- What is the funding process under the Programme?
- How do the Co-operatives attain and retain funding?
- What about the future of the Programme?

Here we reprint two of these sections.

What could the Co-operative Development Program Achieve?

The challenge to high continuing levels of unemployment is to identify appropriate responses which could maximise employment opportunities in the long-term. The employment assumption of the Programme, therefore, is that one way of generating jobs is through the establishment and development of co-operative business enterprises.

The Programme, then, provides funds and resources for actual and proposed co-operatives which are actual or proposed business enterprises and which, therefore, generate employment opportunities in the short and long term. The point about these employment opportunities, however, is that in theory they would otherwise not exist and that because of the co-operative form of the business employment opportunities will be maximised rather than minimised as in more traditional business enterprises. The programme equally addresses employment as well as unemployment.

The significance of the co-operatives lies beyond their business orientation and commitment. The co-operatives are innovative business attempts by local communities and workers to own and control local work opportunities for and by local residents and/or workers through co-operative business enterprises. Locally-based community and/or worker owned and controlled business enterprises are seen to be and could be equitable and democratic business enterprises. There is a strong emphasis in the Programme on the rights of workers,

therefore, are beyond its present small-scale to future possibilities for the ownership and control of workplaces and work by workers and/or communities and, therefore, the decisions that are made about the structure and future of work.

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAMME?

Commitments made to the 19 groups during the 1981-82 financial year are being met. The continuation and/or expansion of the programme will depend on the State Budget. The Programme's survival, however, critically depends co-operatives themselves and their abilities to become successful co-operative business enterprises.

The prospects for worker and community co-operatives depends on the following:

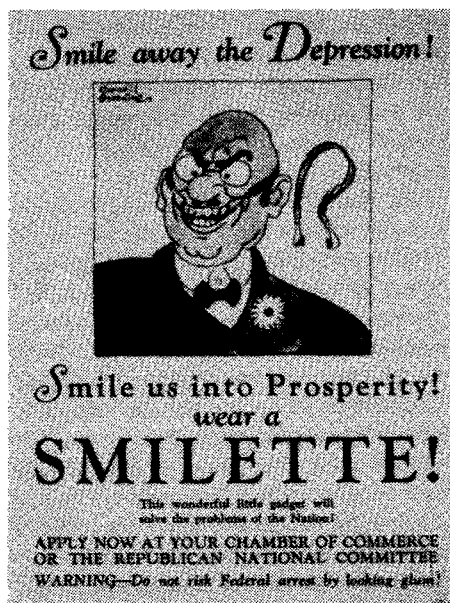
- a. developing entrepreneurial and management skills;
- b. careful recruitment of active and committed co-operative workers and/or members;
- c. successful reconciliation of social and business objectives;
- d. developing an appropriate relationship with the trade union movement;
- e. development of co-operative management structures;
- f. developing effective co-operative education which integrates, commitment, loyalty and democracy;
- g. individual co-operatives uniting into a cohesive co-operative movement;
- h. using the resources made available under the Programme intelligently and responsibly;

- i. increasing income, reducing costs and expanding employment opportunities.

Any future funding under the Programme is likely to be fiercely competitive. The number of groups that it is possible to fund will be determined by the Budget allocation for the Programme, the resources required to effectively monitor co-operatives, the need to provide adequate levels of funding support consistent with programme objectives and efficiency and the capacities of the Co-operative Business and Co-operative Education and Training Units to effectively service funded co-operatives.

Despite this reality context, the Ministry, through its GDP Unit, continues to discuss with groups their co-operative business proposals, the Programme's objectives and funding conditions and will assist in the preparation of applications and business plans. There is always the possibility of expansion and replacement. Expansion would mean that additional funds were available for new groups. Replacement would mean that an existing group was no longer in the Programme and its actual or projected commitment of funds now become available for re-allocation.

In conclusion, therefore, the Co-operative Development Programme has promised in helping address the employment issue but expecting too much too soon from the Programme could abort this potential.



RETAIL GIMMICKS

—By Craig Addison,
Marketing and Media Weekly

Melbourne retailers who "spent up big" on main media advertising to woo Christmas shoppers last December wasted their money, according to Graham Worn, Victorian advertising and promotions manager for Waltons.

Mr. Worn told delegates at the Australian Marketing Institute convention in Melbourne on April 1, 1982, that comparative shopping surveys carried out last December showed that nearly all retail purchases in Melbourne during that month were made from direct mail catalogues.

The survey was conducted by Melbourne's Inview Market Research for Progress Press, Australia's largest direct mail letter box distributors. General Manager of Progress Press, Jeff Holloway, told b&t that the findings quoted by Worn were only preliminary and that full details of the survey would not be available until later in the year. Worn said in most cases, consumers made their choice from a catalogue before going out to shop for Christmas or other gifts. He pointed out that retailers today placed a great deal of importance on catalogues, and they represented a very large part of retail advertising expenditure. "It is a very large prop to our business," he said.

"With more than 42% of married women in the workforce the marketing direction is firmly fixed on the home". "Our strategy is not just to sell the catalogue

items, but to be in a situation where we are exposing other merchandise. It is not unrealistic to expect a lift of up to 40% or more in business during the first week of the catalogue after weekend drop".

Worn said Waltons had recently moved away from the theme approach with catalogues, preferring to put the front page to full use. "Who could argue with the fact that three or four well-researched items on the front page can return over \$500,000 worth of sales," he told AMI delegates.

Progress Press figures show that 430 million pieces of direct mail were delivered in Australia last year, one third of that total in Victoria alone. Quoting Inview Market Research figures, Worn said 77% of people in Melbourne thought information in catalogues was useful, while 66% believed personalised direct mail was a nuisance. In the future, Worn sees the need for a single full-colour shopping guide in which all retailers participated to save costs. "This is an area I believe should be considered at a point in time where there is a saturation of direct mail catalogues," he said. "But in the long term, catalogues will have to contend with some stiff competition from video catalogues". In the United States, retailer Sears Roebuck put its Summer catalogue on a video disc of 54,000 frames and distributed it to 1000 homes across the nation. Worn pointed out that the cost to distribute the disc would be less than a giant catalogue. "Obviously, this is a long way off, because video equipment would have to be in at least 80% of homes," he added.



NOT ONLY TO SAVE OUR JOBS

—Review of the new video from the Education Department of Victoria.

Not only to save our jobs (36 mins, colour) has been produced by Ivan Gaal, AVRB Television Services Unit, for the Secondary Social Science Project, Curriculum Services Unit, Education Department, Victoria.

Modern Maid and Staff Pty Ltd, formerly known as Metters, is a Melbourne manufacturer of gas and electric cookers. In 1978 a takeover bid threatened to close the factory leaving 300 people without jobs. To keep people in work 150 employees purchased shares and become owners of the company.

Not only to save our jobs focuses on the reactions of individual managers and shop-floor workers to the employee takeover. A brief history of the takeover and a description of the new company operations are included.

The video makes extensive use of interviews interspersed with montages of the people and the factory at work, thus evoking the mood of the factory and the employees' involvement.

The production process provides a thread of visual continuity, with the production itself representing a task that unites all of the people at the factory.

Issues raised relate to how ownership and increased involvement in decision-making, affect people's attitudes to:

- the relationship between management and workers
- their jobs
- their working conditions.

The video has been purchased by the Vocational Orientation Centre and should arrive in early October.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

During the month of September, the Education and Training Unit organised these sessions:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 7.9.82 | planning session with Correct Line Graphics |
| 20.9.82 | salespersons sales meeting |
| 20.9.82 | workshop on aspects of wholesaling |
| 21.9.82 | workshop on aspects of retailing |
| 22.9.82 | design workshop for Sybylla Press |
| 27.9.82 | advanced bromide techniques for Correct Line Graphics |
| 28.9.82 | advanced bromide techniques for Brunswick Work Co-operative. |

TOWARDS AN ACTIVE CHOICE OF EMPLOYMENT

Vivian Hutchinson is a New Zealand activist associated with the Community Education Loan Trust (CELT). He writes from a perspective clearly in favour of non-governmental initiated programmes. His remarks are of interest because of the suggestion that co-operatives will constitute a meaningful political alternative only when they are able to aschew the support of government funding and because of the author's conviction that they represent a clear attempt at a cultural practice.

In fairness, it need be stated that the following is a compilation of excerpts from a subsequently longer paper. The constraints of available space has meant that the supporting discussion accompanying the author's observations have been omitted. Nevertheless it is believed that a reasonable survey of the main argument has been provided. We invite comment from members.

** "Does the bullock feel happier about being castrated because he has a stall to sleep in and plenty of hay to eat?"*

— James Baxter

Many of us involved in co-operatives in New Zealand are broadly associated with what is often dubbed the 'alternative' movement. We are a counter-cultural stream within the majority culture — hippies, middle-class drop-outs, feminists, values advocates, musos and artists, radicals and anarchists, 'New Agers', or whatever — people who have consistently since the Sixties moved towards embodying a new sense of culture based on 'holistic' or 'sacred' values.

Although we believe in 'alternatives', we can't deny the basic principle of needing a livelihood to survive and contribute to the world. What we have denied is the *process* the majority culture assumes we should be subjected to (for various reasons...the violence, insensitivity and ill-health that comes with much of the regular employment, the authoritarian nature of much of the workforce, the questionability of the real value or ecological impact of much of the work, etc).

But although we've worked for alternatives in the form of healing or our diets, our relationships, the clothes we wear, and other choices of our daily living...we haven't worked so consistently for alternatives in terms of our livelihood.

** "It is certain that there are a great many good things being done on the Project Employment Programmes (PEP) schemes. Tremendous stuff. There is a "good deal of re-direction of human energy to benefit the local community..."*

page 8.

But this *good* work in itself can serve to further camouflage our wider problem. PEP schemes and unemployment benefits do not *heal* the basic nature of unemployment...they simply and effectively *organise* it out-of-sight. And it's taken many of us quite a while to wake up to the wider implications of what we are involved with.

We have accepted the lolly of the Welfare State. But the shadow side of the lolly (its subtle price) is that it is also a drug. The Welfare paternalism creates with it a fog that keeps us from one another, and the common *struggle* that is the real empowering factor towards change.

We have seen all sorts of protests recently about the three percent cuts in government spending. But should we not be protesting to each other about the deeper effects of the whole welfare system? Much of the government spending that we are protesting to maintain, is keeping us in much the same state as Baxter's castrated bull...and in our state of comfort, we don't so actively work for alternatives. William Thompson observed that the fascism of the future will not see us ruled by pain and terror, as in Hitler's day. Instead we will be ruled by the linked opposite of pleasure and comfort. The shadow of our Welfare State is a good example of this — we are ruled by our addiction to the security it offers.

The State looks after our aging mums, our pregnant sisters or lover, our handicapped, our unemployed and our fools... and the end result is that we are kept *separate*...in a suspended animation that goes nowhere towards healing our state. Perhaps it is even a conscious exercise by the government or the powers-that-be, because to withdraw such subsidies is to release in us a tremendous potential for dissent.

We are being paid to stay on the reservation of our minds and hearts.

**To me, a healthy economic democracy is one where there is a great deal of choice of work-style for its people. The free-enterprise State should give its people the freedom to explore a great variety of choices - be they capitalistic, socialistic, co-operative, or a mixture of social philosophies.*

I'm not suggesting that we vainly throw in all our schemes that we are on, or feel guilty about being on the dole. Such a choice for many would be unwise, especially if you are trying to keep family or home-life together. And it's clear that acceptable alternatives do not as yet readily exist. But if we are going to accept the subsidies, however cynically they are offered, we should accept them in full consciousness as to their real function, and take with it a dedication to working towards appropriate alternatives.

These schemes should not be used as a retreat from the present, but as a window into the future.

We need to actively build links with one another based on goodwill and caring, and pursue honest strategies of bringing this goodwill into manifestation through our work. Alternatives are not created alone - you cannot start a work cooperative with one person. As groups of people in similar predicaments, we need to be honest with ourselves about our true needs... reach out... and struggle sensitively for a group attunement that can express our shared values.

**Although I feel it's healthy to have a variety of work-style choices in an economic democracy, I am personally putting my commitments into the Cooperative Movement. This is simply because cooperatives are the best vehicle to express the sort of values we believe in, and have muddled towards since the Sixties.*

Many of us live a voluntary simplicity, or have a crafts-persons feeling of caring and quality that we need to express through our work. Others may be motivated by spiritual feelings, such as the Buddhist code of Right Livelihood, or the Christian view that work should be 'love made visible'. Cooperatives are the best vehicle for groups of us who want to embody such values through our work.

There is a fledgling cooperative movement in this country, with groups such as C.E.L.T. (Cooperatives Education and Loan Trust), or C.O.W.T. (Cooperative Workers Trust), and even a 'People Bank' in operation that will only lend money to cooperative enterprises.

**These movements are crying out for support and backing - for people to stick their necks out, and embody the sort of alternatives they are talking about. The challenge of such a movement is open to all comers. If friends of existing PEP workers and/or friends on the dole begin to band together, they won't be lacking for sound advice, guidance, and support for their dreams and ventures.*

If you believe (as I do) that the present unemployment is not just a passing thing, but part of the disease of a wider disintegrating culture, then we are going to have to get our act together and learn a whole new range of skills. Our culture has taught us to be incredibly specialised in our work-skills. In order to survive in the future, we will need to try our hands and heads to a wholly new range of tasks... and beyond this, share our skills with one another.

A dedication to learning and sharing new skills should be a hallmark of our active work towards alternatives in employment. It has the added benefit of liberating us from feelings of utter dependence on our crumbling public and private organisations.

We need to get our heads straight about money. We need to go beyond both the hippie regressive denial of basic economics, and the more current 'New Age' wave of prosperity consciousness (which too quickly becomes a camouflage for consumerism).

The economy is a living being, and there are new economic niches (such as a revival of the local economy, and the household economy) that we can seek out fresh opportunities within.

And if we are going to get involved in alternative businesses, we need to be clear about a sense of economics that will serve the community and not suck it. Fortunately, here too, there is plenty of sound advice available. Economists such as E.F. Schumanacher (see "Good-Work") and Paul Hawken, are welcome prophets who are leading us back to a sense of the sacred in money.

* Do we need pressure of fears and fascism to get us off our butts and do something? I've heard many people remark lately that the best thing that could happen to the co-operative movement would be the scrapping of all subsidised schemes and the dole: We would then be forced to reach out to one another, and embody our dreams.

EDUCATION AND RESOURCES

Within the budget allocated to the Education and Training Unit of the Co-operative Development Programme, a considerable sum of money (approximately six thousand dollars) has been set aside for resources. The intention is that a range of materials on the different aspects of co-operatives will be assembled — from literature, videos, pamphlets, reports, etc — and be made available for use by co-operatives and the general public.

A compact but relevant array of useful information on business practices and the various matters critical for their operation — from tax to advertising, tending to accounting — has long been a need for many co-operatives, with the prohibitive costs of purchase of many of the weightier items effectively curtailing attempts to alleviate the problem.

It is appreciated that some co-operatives and certainly some individuals will be in possession of some of the items of the collection but the extent of the

collection and the convenience of borrowing should warrant its establishment. The many government and non-government bodies whose publications will be kept include — the Department of Productivity, the Department of Labour, the Small Business Agency, the Department of Industry and Commerce, the Co-operative Federation of Victoria, the Waikato Co-operative Development Committee for N.S.W. as well as overseas publications, especially those from England. (*C.O.A. News* from London is one example). Of particular value to those co-operatives whose own libraries are already well stocked in these will be the purchase of more specialised material, and in this regard the Education and Training Unit looks especially to co-operatives for recommendations.

While still in its infancy, an inspection of the resource shelves even now reflects the twin emphasis which education and training attempts to accommodate within its general brief. Quite apart from the technical, how-to-do-it material is a range of theoretical and historical works which in various ways and with varying degrees of success attempt to understand co-operatives within a perspective which allows for the consideration of their political implications, their significance as a social grouping, etc. to take place. This would seem to be of fundamental importance and yet the matter of interpretation in this regard has been sadly neglected.

Generally speaking the notion of "understanding co-operatives" has been seen to be concerned with efforts to make known the co-operative principles and to promote at every opportunity their application in a business setting. 'Understanding' in this case is instrumentally defined — a commitment to the principle (the end) is immediately followed on by its execution (the means).

Importantly understanding — and the brief which education has historically carried on its behalf — ranges well beyond this straight forward process of implementation. It asks (or at least should ask) questions which the programmatic approach outlined above must leave essentially unexamined. Questions relating to how co-operation comes to be thought of as an end in itself. What is the modern source of the aspirations which the ideal of co-operation embodies? How is it that governments now attempt to be seen to articulate these aspirations within their own programmes? In other words it brings into view the contest of assumptions in which the necessary rounds of practical life (could we wish for a better example than co-operative business) take place. It becomes extremely difficult to ask such questions within the earlier mentioned framework of means and ends,

where the nature and desirability of the ends must necessarily remain taken-for-granted.

One small step in this direction is through the provision of works which represent attempts by various writers to elaborate in more extensive interpretation of the practice in which co-operatives are involved. Some of the titles listed amongst the following *recent acquisitions* have been included below for this reason.

Beynon H. and Wainwright H. *The Workers Report on Vickers — The Vickers Shop Stewards Combine Committee Report on Work, Wages, Rationalisation, Closure and Rank-and-File Organisation in a Multinational Company*. London, Pluto Press, 1979.

Hird C. *Your Employer's Profits* (Workers' Handbook No.2) London Pluto Press, 1975.

Clark O, Lembecke J and Marotto B Jnr. *Essays on The Social Relations of Work and Labor — A Special Issue of The Insurgent Sociologist Vol VIII, No 2 & 3, Fall 1978*.

Goodrich C.L. *The Frontier of Control — A Study in British Workshop Politics* First published in 1920. This edition, London, Pluto Press, 1975

Coates K and Topham T, *Trade Unions in Britain*. Nottingham, Spokesman, 1980

Zimbalist A. (ed), *Case Studies on the Labor Process*. New York, Monthly Review Press, 1979

Gallie D, *In Search of the New Working Class — Automation and Social Integration within the Capitalist Enterprise* (Cambridge Studies — Sociology 3) London. Cambridge University Press, 1978

Pritchard R.L. (ed). *Industrial Democracy in Australia*. Sydney C.C.H. Australia Ltd, 1976

Moseme Berg (ed) *Technology and Toil in Nineteenth Century Britain*. London CSE Books, 1979

Brandon K, McDonnell J et al. *No Bosses Here! — A manual on working collectively and co-operatively*. Boston, Vocations for Social Change, 1981

Low-Beer J. *Protest and Participation — The New Working Class in Italy*. London, Cambridge University Press, 1978

Lonsbury R (ed). *Democracy in the Workplace*. Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1980

continued page 12

CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT : U.K.

—By David Whitchurch,
Chairman of Directors,
Loch Ard Co-operative,
Warrnambool.

The Co-operative Development Programme in Victoria should closely align itself, and learn from, the Co-operative movement in England. A revolution has been taking place in England during the last five years and we in Victoria are in a perfect position to learn from these experiences with a view to creating a solid and lasting framework for Worker Co-operative development in this State.

I was employed with the Brent Co-operative Development Agency in London during late 1980 and early 1981. It was one of three Co-operative development agencies in London, not including the National CDA, and had the largest staff of any agency of its kind in Britain.

The Agency was partly financed by the Department of the Environment, and the Brent Council. Brent is an area which has boundaries on Westminster and stretches north into Middlesex. It encompasses a population of over 250,000, but in fact advice and liaison took place with people from outside that area in London and throughout Great Britain.

The Brent CDA, like all new organisations, used the first few months of operation in part to establish the office and make contacts essential to the smooth operation of the Agency. Initial work was hampered by the premises only being finally completed about six weeks after all the staff came into post. The initial period was used to create office systems and form a basic library and information system with over 400 files.

The staff, on appointment, were immediately involved in a number of projects because the Agency had in fact been operating on a limited scale under aegis of the Management Committee and some project development work had been undertaken. Furthermore, from the day of opening a rush of new inquiries was received.

The major projects included the Brent Multi-Lingual Community Printshop (the first multi-lingual printshop in Britain). Kilwyn Building and Training Limited, Stonebridge Agent Food Co-operative and the Medical Technology Workshop. Staff input was intense and eventually the first 3 Co-operatives were firmly established with a solid economic base.

Initially an open approach was adopted where the staff provided some assistance to any individual or group who expressed an interest in Co-operatives. Gradually the staff were forced to be selective in their work due to pressures on their time.

The establishment of a sharp focus for the work of the Agency was derived from practical experience and also from interaction with the Management Committee who represented the wider views of the community. These included members of the Trade Union Congress, Brent Council and the Brent Law Centre. Members of the Management Committee assisted the Agency to formulate its policy and this is continuing.

The Agency provided a strong focal point for Co-operative development for a number of reasons. I consider the main reason being the fact that four staff with a broad range of experience with Co-operatives were employed, and that next door was the Brent Law Centre where there were eight lawyers employed. In addition, the Agents had sufficient funding to set up a very well equipped office which included printing machine, photocopier, vast library and most importantly a strong community involvement which ensured our "tentacles" covered a wide area which ensured the Agency could provide strong support for people wishing to establish Co-operatives and conversion Co-operatives.

This is to be continued in the next edition but in the meantime if anyone wishes to contact me to discuss the English (and European) experience or Co-operatives in general (particularly legal matters) write to me care of the Worker Co-operatives Advisor, the Co-operative Federation, 225 Swanston Street, Melbourne.



THE C.D.A., LONDON

—By Karina Veal,
Education and Training Unit

The Co-operative Development Agency, London, exists to promote the co-operative ideal and to provide some assistance for newly formed co-operatives. On July 23, 1981 after many months of uncertainty, the Co-operative Development Agency's immediate future was assured with continued government support, and an increased grants order to 1,500,000 pound from 900,000 pound. It appears that the co-operative contribution to job creation is particularly favoured. The Under-Secretary of State for Industry, Mr. John MacGregor, M.P., said as he presented the approval to the House that "in the economic situation that we face, it must be right to put the emphasis firmly on job creation and practical activity". During the hour-long debate in the House of Commons, the support given to the Co-operative Development Agency by various members showed the diversity of reasons for co-operative support.

The visionary appeal of co-operatives to some was expressed by Mr. Ted Graham, M.P. (Co-operative Party spokesperson), who said of the grant, "my warm welcome is not only for the renewal of cash but for the renewal of the faith. The Minister has faith that there is a job to be done by the agency".

Interest in industrial democracy and socialist organisation of the workplace appear to have lessened somewhat as priorities for co-operation amid the enthusiasm for job creation. The Minister explained that "the decision was taken after a critical review of the agency's performance to date and a careful assessment of its potential national contribution in generating business and jobs".



Bearing in mind that the ruling government is conservative and support came from quarters as diverse as the Liberal Party's Mr. J. Grimmond (who is interested in what co-operatives can offer towards industrial control) it is not so surprising that the early 70's demands for workers control are no longer as openly associated with the C.D.A.

Perhaps these differing views go some way towards explaining why the Labor government established Co-operative Development Agencies in a time when massive slashing of public sector funds by the conservative government is so common, has survived so well.

LOCAL CO-OP DEVELOPMENT

Distinct from the London Co-operative Development Agency are the 40 or so local Co-operative Development Agencies scattered around Britain. They have local co-operators and community representatives on their boards and their services to new co-operatives allow co-operatives to establish themselves with expertise coming from sources other than the open market. As a body to establish new co-operatives, the local Co-operative Development Agency can be more effective than a community committee. Anyone interested in learning more about U.K. worker co-operatives who have received assistance from their local Co-operative Development Agency should view the video *Co-operatives at Work* (25 mins) available from the Co-operative Federation of Victoria.

The May/June 1982 edition of *Worklink* explores the possibilities of establishing local co-operative development agencies in New South Wales. Serious consideration of the idea is being given by three local authorities with Broken Hill expressing keen intent. The ideas for local Co-operative Development Agencies in New South Wales are based firmly on the U.K. models and would be funded by local government. The *Co-operative Review* will keep you informed of further developments in this field.



Women at work in the design department at Colver's printers.

Campbell A and Molloy J. *Getting Organised*. London, Pan Books 1981

Noble P. *America By Design — Science, Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism*. London, Oxford University Press, 1977

Zwardling D. *Workplace Democracy — A guide to Workplace Ownership, Participation and Self-Management experiments in the United States and Europe*. New York, Harper and Row, 1980

Scott J.W. *The Glassworker of Carmause — French Craftsmen and Political Action in a Nineteenth Century City* London, Cambridge University Press, 1974

Weeks J. *Capital and Exploitation*. London, Edward Arnold, 1981

Hunnius G, Garson G and Case J (eds) *Workers' Control — A Reader on Labor and Social Change*. New York Vintage Books, 1973

Dobb M. *Welfare Economics and the Economics of Socialism — Towards a Commonsense Critique*. London, Cambridge University Press, 1969

RESOURCE PROJECT

In addition to these two areas of resources already mentioned the Education and Training Units has sponsored the compilation of a number of promotional photographs of the co-operatives under the programme. The full collection is stored at the Vocational Orientation Centre, and has been used on the occasion of a number of seminars conducted by the Education and Training Unit and the VOC. The co-operatives are soon to receive mounted copies of these for their own purposes. The Unit is interested in hearing from co-operatives as to what they would believe to be the most appropriate resource project next to be undertaken.

All the materials mentioned in this article are available. They are housed in the Vocational Orientation Centre's library at 42 Cardigan Street, Carlton (347 7611 Ext 256) which provides a postal service for country borrowers. Rhonda Small, the librarian, is only too happy to assist with your enquiries in this regard. Should you have a recommendation for purchase, a video you would like to see included in the section, or a more general enquiry please contact Tony Ayers at the Vocational Orientation Centre.

The Outcome?

At the time of going to press there are a number of questions still to be answered:

- Why was no further allocation made?
- With whom has the CDP lost favour?
- Will Mr Simmonds be able to grant more money from the Ministry?
- What is the Government's policy on continuation of the CDP?
- Is the reference on page 56 of the budget estimates which refers to \$600,000 for *loans* and expenses, a misprint?
- Will co-operatives in the programme be able to apply for monies under the new Employment Initiatives Programme as well as from the CDP?
- Is it *intended* that they do so, to justify a winding down of the Programme?
- How will the Cabinet sub-committee on employment view co-operatives?

Co-operatives will be kept informed of relevant developments as soon as possible.

